

Lincoln. p. 449.

"WITH MEN WHO DO THINGS"

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MORE THAN CONQUERORS

BY ARIADNE GILBERT

THE MATTERHORN OF MEN

(Conclusion)

"That craggy peak among mountains—the Matterhorn; that craggy peak among men—Abraham Lincoln."

ST. NICHOLAS for February, page 308.



Photo. by Underwood & Underwood.
THE MATTERHORN.



Statue by St.-Gaudens.
ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

LINCOLN'S task, as President, required not only all his keen brain and responsive heart, but all his rugged endurance. That fine stock of health, won by outdoor training, would be needed as a brace for the long strain of the long days. As

farmer boy used to going to bed at dark could n't help it, I believe." With this half-excuse, Lincoln got up, went into the next room, and wrote for a moment in a careful hand. Then, folding the paper, his troubled, gray eyes

Emerson rightly said, "Here was place for no holiday magistrate, no fair-weather sailor; the new pilot was hurried to the helm in a tornado." His story is the story not only of the whole Civil War—"four years of battle days"—but the story of a man besieged on every side with numberless personal demands, and, at the same time, the story of a man who kept himself so simply a man, aside from his Presidential office, that history leaves us a hundred memories of good times spent with Tad, and of tenderness to the private soldiers.

For convenience, let us take the liberty of compressing the events, sayings, and writings of several days into one, and so following the President's mind in its rapidly changing problems. In reality, the incidents here given were scattered over perhaps six or seven months; but they were all true. This imaginary day will not be a Tuesday or Friday, which were Cabinet days, nor a Saturday, when he sometimes held public receptions. But, more common than any of those, it will be what Lincoln called "*a mighty hard day.*" Many days were equally kaleidoscopic, and many days, with him, were eighteen hours long.

A little after midnight, he was aroused by a messenger with a telegram pleading for the life of a nineteen-year-old boy who had fallen asleep at his post, and was to be shot the next day.

"I can't seem to say no to these things. A

brimmed with glad light as he said, "Now you just telegraph that mother that her boy is safe, and I will go back to bed. There's no harm done," in answer to the messenger's apology for the interruption. "I shall sleep all the better. There's no medicine so good for sleep as writing a soldier's pardon. Anyway," with a twinkle, "I have slept with one eye open ever since I came to Washington; I never close both except when an office-seeker is looking for me."

But even with that fine sleeping potion (saving a life), Lincoln had but a tossing night. Willie and Tad were both sick, and two or three times he got up to see how the little boys were resting, and then he went back to lie awake and wonder about the halting general who would not strike a blow.

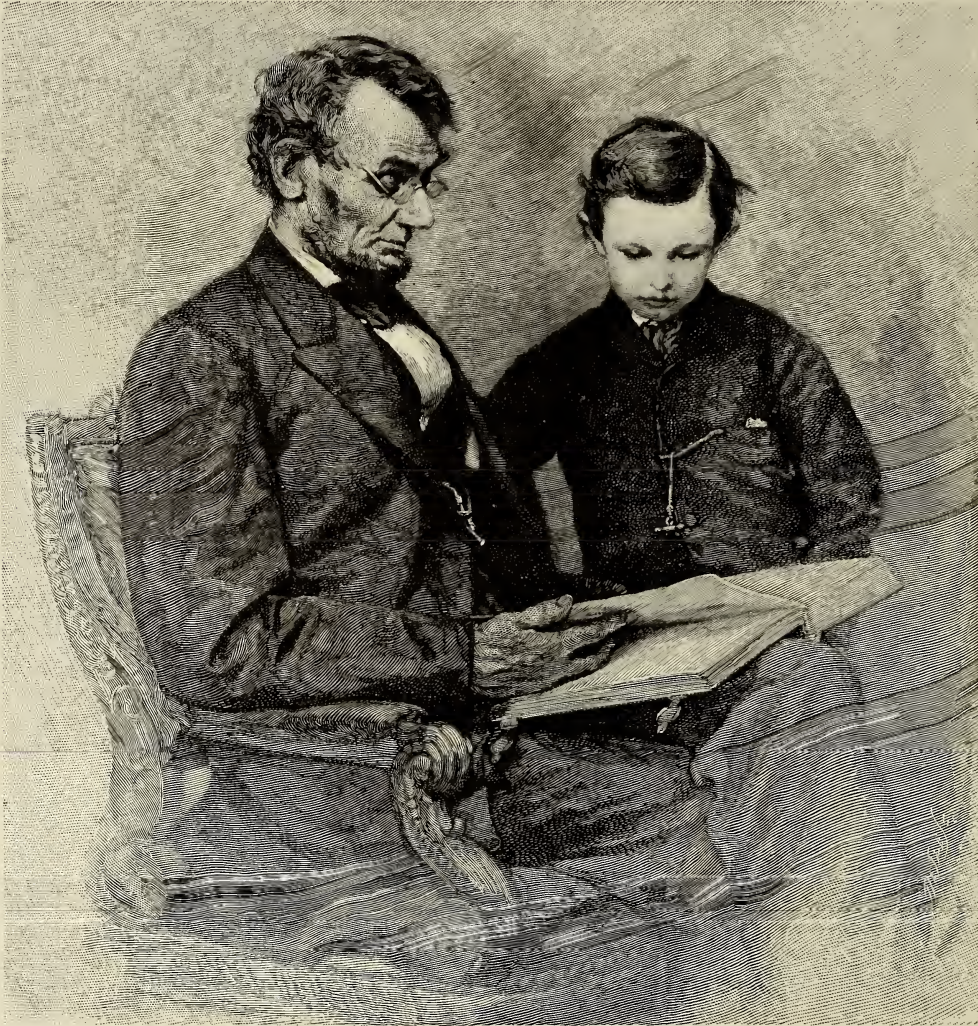
Next morning, he came down-stairs eating a big, red apple, and, loving the peaceful, eastern light and the homelike twitterings of the birds, took an early walk with Hatch to where he could see the white tents of his soldiers. Lincoln was wrapped in his big, gray shawl. As the reveille sounded, he looked down on the men just waking to work, and said sadly: "That is not the Army of the Potomac; that is McClellan's body-guard."

Back at the White House by nine o'clock, he hurried through breakfast. Then, as usual, he walked over to the War Department to discuss the situation and read the telegrams, mainly from

McClellan. There they were: demands for more men and more supplies, excuses for delay, arguments that if he should fight and lose, it would n't be his fault. As Lincoln read them over, he said wearily: "If General McClellan does not want to use the army for some days, I should like to borrow it." Then, after much deliberation, he

made-up reasons for postponing action, lay Grant's telegram to Buckner, "No terms, except unconditional and immediate surrender."

When the President had finished his work at the War Department, he returned to his office and the heap of letters piled on his desk. The crowd had already begun to gather in the halls



From a photograph by Brady.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND "TAD."

despatched two telegrams: one ordering the constant protection of the important city, Washington, which McClellan seemed ready to forget; the other reminding the general that he must make sure that he was not so "over-cautious" as to be "unmanly."

McClellan had a talent for making excuses. Welcome to the President, among these many

and anteroom: lame veterans, anxious mothers of soldiers, and a multitude of office-seekers. But Louis, who had taken their cards, had told them that Lincoln must first attend to his mail, which often took two or three hours. Applicants at the White House needed patience; so did the President. In company with his private secretary, he read and answered the most important letters at

once. The first envelop he opened this morning was a report so long that he exclaimed in despair, "I should want a new lease of life to read this through! If I send a man to buy a horse for me, I expect him to tell me his *points*—not how many *hairs* there are in his tail." As he spoke, his eyes fell on a letter in Horace Greeley's familiar hand. Greeley, the founder of the "New York Tribune," was important enough to have a pigeonhole in Lincoln's desk to himself. He had an immense following. As Emerson said, he did the thinking for the American farmers "at a dollar a head." Whatever criticisms Greeley made were reflected in the minds of thousands. The letter to-day held the usual suggestions: terms of peace ought to be drawn up; emancipation ought to be proclaimed, etc.

Now Greeley was no more anxious for peace and emancipation than the burdened President; but Lincoln, in his wisdom, knew that the southerners would not agree to peace terms yet, and that the time was not ripe to proclaim emancipation. He must wait for a signal victory.

When Lincoln had carefully read Greeley's letter, his secretary pointed out a column of bitter criticism in the "Tribune." But the President, who barely had time to "skirmish" with the newspapers, gave it no more than a glance. He had a principle against reading attacks on himself. Or was it a comfortable indifference? "If the end brings me out all right," he thought, "what is said against me won't amount to anything; if the end brings me out wrong, ten angels swearing I was right would make no difference." This morning, he said cheerfully: "When I think of Greeley, I feel like the big fellow whose little wife used to beat him over the head without resistance. The man would say, 'Let her alone. It don't hurt me, and it does her a power of good.'" Then, after sitting sprawingly still for a while and gnawing the end of his pen, he wrote the famous letter to Greeley (here quoted in part only):

My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or to destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that.

Many other letters he read and answered; but, while still busy, an attendant came in with a handful of cards, and the mail gave place to a swarm of applicants, nine tenths of them office-seekers. After Lincoln had seen, one at a time, the members of Congress, and others associated with the government, he belonged very truly to the people. "My rightful masters," he had called them in his first inaugural. And now, as

he heard their many demands and requests, they were masters of his time and thought. To-day, the first of the waiting crowd was an office-seeking editor, who, to help his claim, produced a yellowed, old newspaper to prove that he had been the first to name Lincoln for nomination.

"Do you really think that announcement was the occasion of my nomination?"

"Certainly," was the hopeful reply.

"Well, don't be troubled about it; I forgive you." And Lincoln politely opened the door, and the editor passed out.

Next, in solemn parade, came a committee of ministers, to tell the President that God had revealed to them his duty in regard to slavery.

"I hope it will not be irrelevant in me to say that, if it is probable that God would reveal His will to others, on a point so connected with my duty, it might be supposed He would reveal it directly to me." And presently, by his silent forcefulness, the committee knew that the interview was ended, and they gave place to a stormy-looking citizen, who said, among other things, that Stanton had called the President a "fool."

"Did Stanton say I was a fool?" (very coolly). "He did, sir."

"If Stanton said I was a fool, then I must be one, for he is nearly always right."

While Lincoln waited for the next visitor, he turned to the big map of his country, always hanging in the office, and took up his perpetual war-puzzle. "In front was a solid and defiant South; behind, a divided and distrustful North." He studied the map a great deal, and between whiles, when he could snatch the time, read one of three books always at hand: Artemus Ward or



"TAD" LINCOLN IN UNIFORM.

Shakspeare for entertainment, and the Bible for strength.

But another committee had stalked in, confident in the right to interfere, and full of advice as unlimited as it was unsought.

"Gentlemen," answered the patient President, "suppose all the property you were worth was in gold, and you had put it in the hands of Blondin to carry across the Niagara River on a rope; would you shake the cable, or keep shouting out

they can. Don't badger them. Keep silence, and we 'll get you safe through."

When the President had despatched this committee, he refused further calls till afternoon, "ran the gantlet" through the crowded corridors to the west end of the house, and there ate his simple lunch: a glass of milk, a biscuit, and an apple.

Before going back to his office, he glanced again at the "Tribune," and his eye lighted on

Stedman's poem, "Abraham Lincoln, give us a Man!" Though its truth stung him, he, himself, was too true to hide the sting. It was a plea for a northern general to match the southern hero, Robert E. Lee, and Lincoln cut it out to read aloud to his Cabinet:

"Is there never one in all the land,
One on whose might the Cause
may lean?
Are all the common ones so grand,
And all the titled ones so mean?

Oh, we will follow him to the death,
Where the foeman's fiercest columns are!

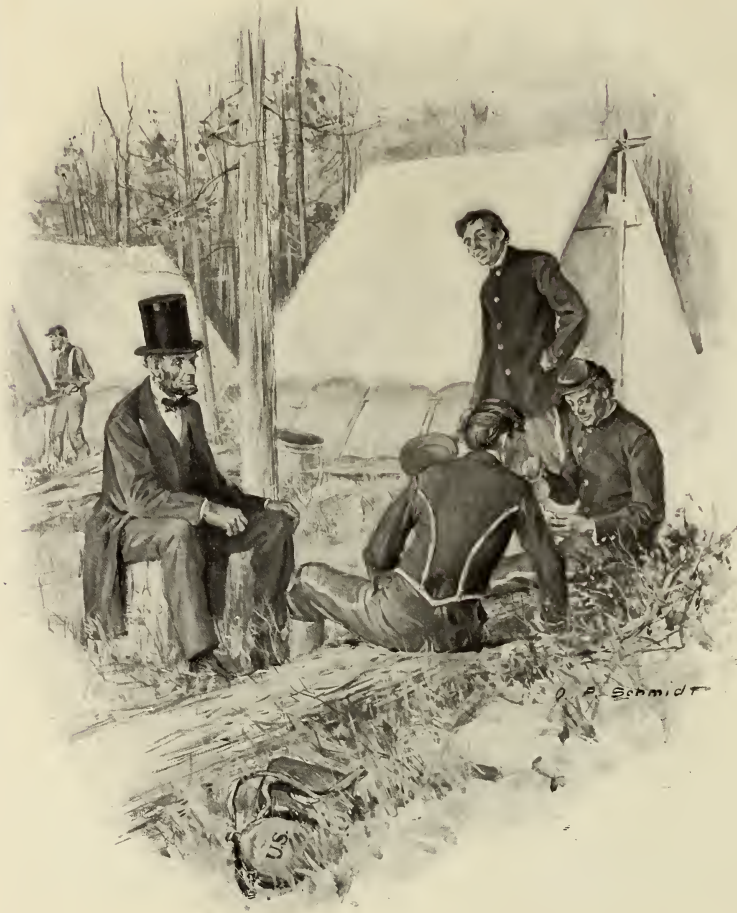
Oh, we will use our latest breath
Cheering for every sacred star!
His to marshal us high and far,
Ours to battle, as patriots can,
When a Hero leads the Holy War!
Abraham Lincoln, give us a Man!"

"Whichever way it ends," he sighed, his mind heavy with war, "I have the impression that I sha' n't last long after it's over." Then, with bowed head, he went back to his office, there to receive more visitors till four o'clock in the afternoon.

"*Flabbiness* is the only word to express my feelings at the end of a long day open to the flood-gates of public demand," he said to his wife, as he seated himself beside her for their customary drive.

At their six o'clock dinner, Mrs. Lincoln brokenly told him that Willie was worse. Growing alarmed, Lincoln gave up the theater that evening, and excused himself from every one to sit beside the sick child. That night, as for many nights before, he shared the watch with the nurse.

How he prayed for his boy's young life, alone



"‘THAT COFFEE SMELLS GOOD, BOYS; GIVE ME A CUP.’" (SEE PAGE 454.)

to him, 'Blondin, stand up a little straighter!—Blondin, stoop a little more—go a little faster—lean a little more to the north—lean a little more to the south'? No! You would hold your breath as well as your tongue, and keep your hands off till he was safe over. The Government is carrying an immense weight. Untold treasures are in our hands. They are doing the very best



"I CAN'T HELP IT! HE'S A GOOD TURKEY, AND I WON'T HAVE HIM KILLED!" SOBBED TAD.

THE INTERRUPTED CABINET MEETING. (SEE PAGE 454.)

by the little bed, no one will ever know. "I have been many times driven to my knees," he once said, "by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go." To our short vision, the longing prayers of that night were not answered: Willie died February 20, 1862; and the man who, in childhood, had lost his mother, and, in youth, Ann Rutledge, the girl he loved, gave up his little boy, and, wan and shaken as he was by grief, gripped again the affairs of the nation.

We can imagine, however, the tender look that crossed his face, a few days later, when he sent an officer's commission to the boy who had slept at his post, tired from carrying a double load. It was as if, for a moment, President Lincoln had assumed divine fatherhood, and answered the prayer of some one else for a treasured life. "The soldier who can carry a sick comrade's baggage, and die for the deed without a murmur, deserves well of his country," he said.

From thus following Lincoln through this imaginary day, we can get a dim idea of four

years of such life in that hardest place—the President's.

Like a watchfully great physician, Lincoln kept his hand on the pulse of the whole nation. There were the armies of Tennessee, winning large tracts under Grant's bulldog control; there was the Navy, fighting a glorious fight. But, during the early part of the struggle, a series of disasters to the Union Army around the Potomac made victory almost certain for the South. Some of the northern generals cowered before Lee as if he was invulnerable. Long delays and slighted opportunities; that full retreat at the first Bull Run "to the sound of the enemy's cannon"; even a resignation of one general on the very eve of battle—these were a few of the failures.

And yet, as Lincoln said, worse than this fear of Lee, yes, the very hardest thing about the war (next to the awful sacrifice of life), was the jealousy among his generals, particularly among the minor officers. "Family quarrels," Lincoln called them; but they made him a world of

trouble, those refusals of general after general to act under another's command. The President was constantly shifting his men about, trying to find the right general in chief; and, hardly less important, the right leader for the Army of the Potomac. Military knowledge, stability, and

fathers and sobbing mothers to defer the execution of boys who had deserted, or to pardon on account of youth. And, with every pardon, rained down a storm of condemnation, on Lincoln, the over-merciful.

"Let me keep alive till this great trouble is over," he sighed, "and then I will take a long rest—a very long one perhaps."

We do not wonder that he had to snatch from his labors moments of rest through humorous books, the theater, or little Tad. Robert Lincoln was no longer a child. He had entered Harvard before his father became President. But young Tad had not only the freedom of the White House, but went along on horseback when his father reviewed the troops. The President sat his horse like a general, and Tad galloped gaily behind, his cloak flying in the wind. Probably the child thought that his father was as interested in all the boy's affairs, particularly the pet goats, and Jack the turkey, as he was in the outcome of the war. Early one December, this fine, large turkey had been sent to the White House for the President's Christmas dinner. Tad immediately adopted him, fed him, and trained him to follow him about the yard. In the midst of a Cabinet meeting, a few days before Christmas, the child flung open the door, and, rushing to his father, sobbed out: "They're going to kill Jack! They're going to kill Jack!"

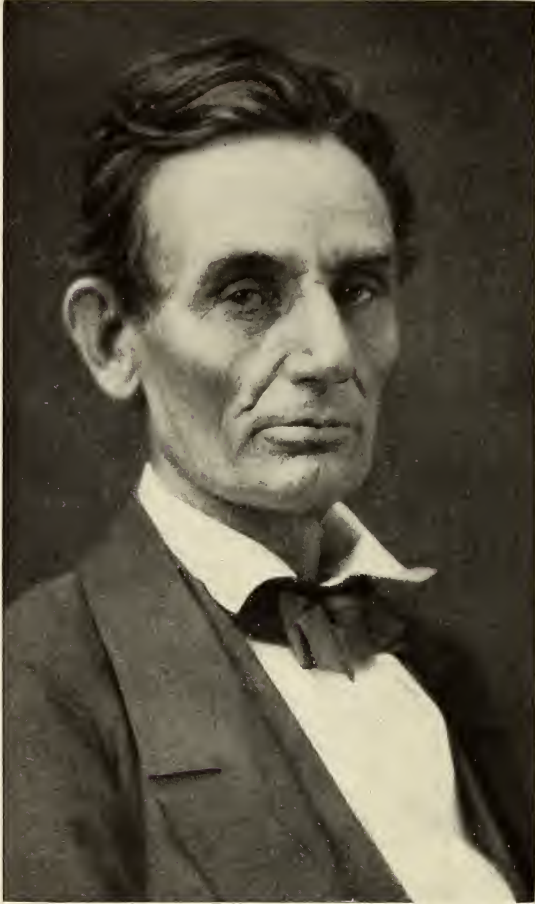
Official business waited. The President held the throbbing little body close for a moment, and then said, taking the tear-stained face between his hands:

"But Jack was sent to us to be killed and eaten for this very Christmas."

"I can't help it! He's a good turkey, and I won't have him killed!" in passionate grief from Tad.

Then, with comical dignity, Lincoln took a small card, and wrote on it Jack's reprieve in the exact form he used for the reprieves of other condemned prisoners; and Tad, a winning lawyer, raced off, to set the turkey free.

Lincoln's children were not the only ones to feel his fatherliness. The soldiers loved to have him come to camp and shake their hands, and call them his "boys." Some he knew even by their first names. "He always called me Joe," remembers one old veteran. "That coffee smells good, boys; give me a cup," he would say, or he would sit down on a camp-stool among them to eat beans. Though at one time, when he made his hospital rounds, there were from five to six thousand soldiers, he shook hands with every one, lighting the grizzled faces and sunken eyes with that tenderly sympathetic smile that almost



From a photograph by Fassett, Chicago.
ABRAHAM LINCOLN, IN 1859.

courage had to be combined. We have but to read the list of changes to see how the bewildered Lincoln tried one after another, and still did not find the right man. No wonder perplexity furrowed his face; it furrowed his tired heart. To hope, and hope again, and then be disappointed—that was his life. Mentally to map out a forward march, and then to get that worn-out message, "We have recrossed the Rappahannock."

"What will the country say! What will the country say!" he exclaimed at last, pacing up and down, his face ashen with grief, and the yellow bit of paper shaking in his big hand.

Meanwhile pleas poured in from sad-eyed

had the power of healing. Three of the wards were full of wounded southerners. "Mr. President, you won't want to go in there," said the escorting doctor; "they are only *rebels*."

"You mean Confederates," was the quick reply, "southern gentlemen." And every soldier in those three wards was greeted as cordially as all the rest. "They must always remember that we have suffered with them through all this. And when it is all over, if God gives us a victory, we must show mercy." To Lincoln the Civil War was never "the Rebellion"; it was "This Great Trouble."

When he first became President, he had cherished a hope that the Government might emancipate the slaves by buying them from their owners. In two messages, mathematically worked out, he had set forth this dearest plan of his life. It might take thirty-seven years in its accomplishment, it would be a great cost to the nation, but, even then, it would cost less than war; and it was "much—very much that it would cost no blood at all." . . . "The way is plain, peaceful, generous, just," he pleaded, "a way which, if followed, the world will forever applaud, and God must forever bless."

But the plan failed. War, with its terrible costs of money and life, continued. Lincoln was only too anxious to issue an emancipation proclamation, but he had to wait for a northern victory. At last this came, in the battle of Antietam, following which, on September 22, 1862, the newspapers announced that, on the first of the next January, the slaves would be set free. Late on New-Year's afternoon, in 1863, Secretary Seward brought the proclamation to the President for his signature. At the reception that day, standing beside Mrs. Lincoln, elegant in spreading satin, the President had shaken such hundreds of hands that his own hand was nearly paralyzed. As he took the paper, the "most vital document of the century," he waited a moment, then, slowly but strongly, wrote his name. "It looks a little tremulous," he said, "for my hand was tired; but my resolution was firm."

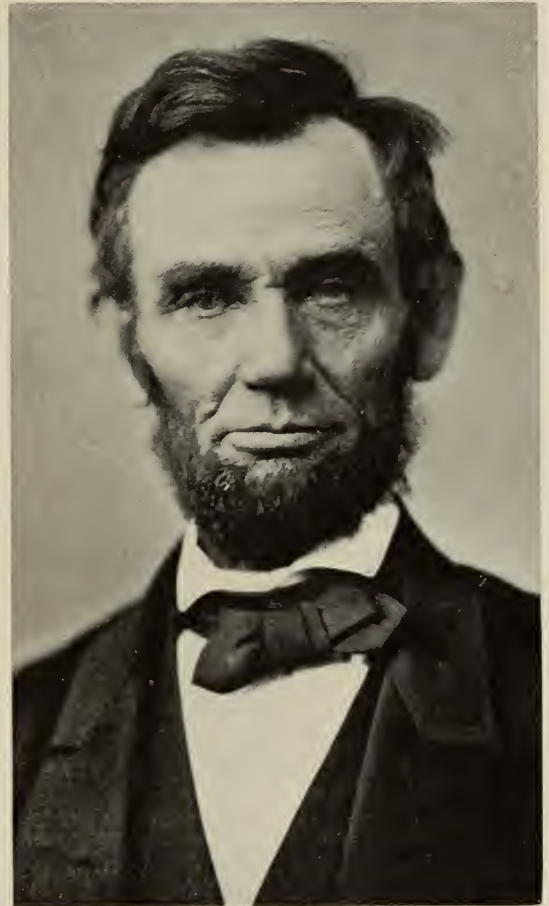
The following July came the terrible triumph of Gettysburg—that awful three days' battle which was called a victory. In "The Perfect Tribute," Mrs. Andrews has given us the best possible story of how Lincoln wrote his Gettysburg address on a piece of wrapping-paper, and then, after Edward Everett's two hours of eloquence, offered it to the multitude in its brief perfection. History has never given so great an example of *confidence in the power of simplicity*.

Meantime, the President had found the commander he was looking for—"Unconditional Sur-

render" Grant. Lincoln beamed his satisfaction. "He makes no fuss, but makes things git," he said.

"What our generals need to learn is that Lee is mortal," Grant had calmly concluded.

And now, at last, Lincoln placed unquestioning



Copyright, 1891, by M. P. Rice.
ABRAHAM LINCOLN, IN 1864.

confidence in another. "The particulars of your plans I neither know nor seek to know," he wrote. And on March 10, 1864, in an impressive ceremony, he appointed Grant to the newly created office of lieutenant-general. The President spoke the solemn words as if he were not only knighting a hero, but consecrating a leader: "As the country herein trusts you, so, under God, it will sustain you."

In American history, the year 1864 is marked by a succession of calls for more troops. Twice the President issued drafts for soldiers, one of 500,000, the other of 200,000. On July 4, he called for 500,000 volunteers. That these un-

popular calls might cost him his reelection in the next November, he knew perfectly well. But his integrity argued, "It is not a personal question at all. It matters not what becomes of *me*. *We must have the men*. If I go down, I intend to go like the *Cumberland*, with my colors flying."

Though he was human enough to crave a second term, he did not expect it. His renomination was a surprise. "It reminds me of the Dutch farmer who thought it was n't best to swap horses while crossing a stream," he laughed; then added, soberly, "I am thankful to God for this approval of the people."

Indeed, Lincoln had not only this approval of "the people," but the approval of many individuals who had once been enemies. Of his rival, Seward, he had made a fast-bound friend; of the inflammable Stanton, a watchful caretaker, nervous as a woman at Lincoln's propensity to go about unguarded. And now, at the second inauguration, his old opponent, Douglas, seeing that Lincoln did not quite know what to do with his hat, stepped forward, took it, and humbly held it through the whole speech. That gracious self-conquest was too noble to be forgotten. As Lincoln rose to take, for the second time, his oath of office, strangely and beautifully, out of the gloom of the winter sky burst a bright sunbeam and shone down like a blessing. It made Lincoln's heart jump. The crowd cheered and shouted, but were hushed in an instant as he raised his hand to speak. Yet, even as he said those benignant words, "With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right," a dark man in the crowd was listening with smothered hate, and planning to do him harm.

And now, the war was almost over. "I beg to present you, as a Christmas gift, the city of Savannah," had been Sherman's December telegram. For months the Confederate army had lived on less than one third rations, without blankets or shoes, with horses, mules, and men sharing a common hunger. The brave "gray lines" had grown very thin. Stonewall Jackson had been killed at Chancellorsville. At last, from mere exhaustion and to save a final sacrifice of life, Lee and his fragment of an army were starved into surrender. On Palm Sunday, April 9, 1865, the grand old southern general gave up his sword. And in the north, cannon boomed, bells rang, flags flaunted in the spring breeze.

There came almost a week of strange elation. The President drove in his carriage; he read to Tad; he dreamed of the end of his official life and a quiet return to the Springfield home.

Reluctantly, on the night of April 14, he thrust his gnarled hands into a pair of white kid gloves (he was never quite comfortable in gloves), and started for Ford's Theater. His wife had planned a box-party for that evening, and the whole audience rustlingly awaited their late arrival, and cheered their entrance with free-handed, full-throated power. But in the night outside couched an enemy, skulkingly taking notes of the President's glory. He was the dark man in the crowd at the second inauguration. John Wilkes Booth, an actor, with knowledge of the theater's "every entrance and exit," and perfect freedom to come and go, stole through the now-deserted hall to the back of the President's box. There was a flash, a loud report, a cry. Lincoln fell forward.

On the hush of midnight following the day of glory broke the clangor of alarm bells and the dull boom of cannon; while in a humble house, across the street from Ford's Theater, faithful doctors and a few friends watched over our greatest national treasure in a last agonizing effort to guard it still. But the bullet had entered Lincoln's brain. In the quiet of the April morning, his great soul found its great rest.

"Now he belongs to the ages!" whispered Stanton.

Public buildings fluttering with useless black; private homes darkly shrouded; even the little children wearing their bits of mourning; these were a few of our land's vain efforts to express an inexpressible grief. Away back in Coles County, a white-faced old mother sobbed aloud at the crushing news, "I did n't want him elected President. I always knew they'd kill him." And Tad? With the books that he and his father had shared, the pencils his father had sharpened, and all the little personal things that held such double preciousness, Tad could not even look at the silent, care-worn face of him whose cares were now laid down.

They buried President Lincoln near his old home in Springfield, Illinois; and Willie's little body was carried home with his father's over the blossom-bordered miles that sang of spring and life. There must have been a great many friends waiting at the station who, less than five years before, had come there in the rain to say good-by.

"Great captains, with their guns and drums

Disturb our judgment for the hour,

But at last silence comes;

These all are gone, and, standing like a tower,

Our children shall behold his fame.

The kindly earnest, brave, foreseeing man,

Sagacious, patient, dreading praise not blame,

New birth of our new soil,—the first
American."